

No day off for MATTHEW BRODERICK



Matthew Broderick leads the fun in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, the new CIC release. Bob Eborall talks to this star of *WarGames* and *Ladyhawke*...

Matthew Broderick, like Michael J. Fox, is one of those 1980s actors with a college boy face and look, although he's now 24. This serves him well in the very enjoyable teen comedy, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, in which he plays Ferris, a very smart student with a sudden urge to quit school for a day and have a real outing, which he does in the company of Mia Sara and Alan Ruck.

Although, when I chatted to him, he was on his way back home to the States after a holiday in

Ireland, a day off is rather a luxury for friendly Matthew. His father is the late actor James Broderick, of *Dog Day Afternoon* and *Alice's Restaurant*, and who played the father in the TV series *Family*.

Broderick has been a very busy young man since he made his professional debut in an off-Broadway production of Horton Foote's 'Valentine Day', co-starring with his father. He then studied with drama coach Uta Hagen and voice coach Robert Leonard, but he credits his parents with being the major forces in his career. His mother,

Patricia Broderick, was a playwright and stage director.

"I loved watching my father on stage. He was the first actor I ever saw, and he was very generous in teaching me my craft and shaping my attitudes towards acting and the business of acting. And my mother also helped. She showed me how to work a scene, and to this day, helps me break down a part."

Broderick's stage breakthrough came when he landed a part in the stage hit, 'Torch Song Trilogy', for which he won an Outer Critics' Circle award. He also caught

the eye of Neil Simon, who cast him in the role of Marsha Mason's son in the film *Max Dugan Returns*, marking his film debut. Simon also cast him as Eugene in the stage version of 'Brighton Beach Memoirs'.

After this came the successful movie, *WarGames*, in which Broderick played a computer whiz kid who nearly starts World War 3 by breaking into a government computer. Then he returned to the stage for 'Brighton Beach Memoirs', which later reached Broadway, and earned the actor a Tony award.

Next came filming on

Horton Foote's *1918*, in which he played a restless teenager. This was quickly followed by *Ladyhawke*, in which Broderick played a medieval thief opposite stars Rutger Hauer and Michelle Pfeiffer. But the busy actor still found time for the theatre, returning to the stage for 'Master Harold... And The Boys', the Broadway production of 'Biloxi Blues' in March 1985, and the second in Simon's trilogy had Broderick playing the older version of his character in 'Brighton Beach Memoirs'. Then at weekends he found time to film Foote's *On Valentine Day*, a follow-up to *1918*.

After a six-month run Broderick left and began rehearsals for *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, which has just been released on CIC Video. The plot concerns our hero Ferris, a fun-loving extrovert who cuts school and heads for downtown Chicago accompanied by his girlfriend Mia Sara and buddy Alan Ruck. Transport is only the best — a red, 1961 Ferrari. Ferris goes to great pains to cover his tracks, leaving excuses with his parents and the Dean of Students, but both the Dean and his sister set out to expose the culprit.

Sporting a small beard and moustache, Broderick outlined future plans. "I'm going back to New York to be in a play, 'The Widow Clare'. I play a young man who has a love affair with the widow. Before I went on holiday, I finished a film, *Project X*, in which I played a 23 year-old, my age at the time."



Broderick debut with Marsha Mason in *Max Dugan Returns*

Matthew obviously enjoyed making *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. "It was fun to make, and I had a lot of friends in the film. I had just done a play with Alan Ruck for eleven months in New York. It was an exciting film to make, and every day was a different location." Was it like he remembers school? "It was not like my own schooldays, although I did cut school. Then I would go with my friend into Central Park."

What was it like working with the film's writer, director and co-producer John Hughes? "He's very interested in young people and every movie he has done so far has been about that age group. Now he's working on adults, 25 up. He was very nice to work with, and quite different from other people I have worked with." Hughes' previous films include *The Breakfast Club* and *Weird Science*.

I wondered how Broderick felt about always playing younger characters. "I guess I look young," smiled Matthew. "It can be considered a

good thing — it got me the jobs I did. I don't think of it as a curse. I think I have a fairly long career ahead of me, and, as I get older, there will be more theatre."

Broderick explained that "the things I get offered for films are a little less imaginative sometimes, and like something I have already done. On stage I do stronger stuff. I would like to do a film that was heavier, but I am just starting out."

Does he work hard on his characters?

"Everyone works differently, but as long as it works it's hard to see which is better than another. I work very hard on the script and when I get to the theatre or the set, I like very much to be myself."

Keeping a hawkish eye in *Ladyhawke*

Has Matthew ambitions to produce or direct? "Sometimes I read a script without a producer and I try to get people to put it on."

Matthew said that a problem in America is that "cinemas are getting chopped up. What was one big theatre is now three small ones, and the reason people come to the cinema is that it has a big screen, and it's a pity not to have that."

Anything to say about the forthcoming *Project X*? "I play an aspiring pilot, and in the film there are chimpanzees being trained in sign language. One of them tries to get my attention, and I learn what they are being trained for. I got bitten once by a chimp — they are very, very dangerous animals," he smiled.

As a small child he loved being backstage with his parents. "Then I tried being on stage at high school and I realised it was not as scary as I thought," said this busy young actor, who has more than enough experience under his belt to get rid of any stage fright left.

